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Whist Rhymes,

Conforming to Pole's Theory, Development and Rules.

Hopson & Sherman

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No. 22653

WHIST RHYMES.

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If your hand is good, or bad, or fair,
From beginning to end use the greatest care
To play with your partner in combination;
This rule allows no variation.
Don't rely on yourself the whole work to do;
But work for your partner, as he must for you.

THE LEAD.

The first card you lead from those in hand
Says to your partner: "I'm of a strong band.
He who leads in this suit has several more;
He has certainly three, and possibly four.
To establish this suit is his principal aim;
You must help and lead back his suit,—the same."

Lead long-suit king, if backed by ace or queen;
If without ace, let small card next be seen.
With ace, queen, knave: queen follows after ace.
With ace, four small ones, give to ace first place.
Lead head of sequence, if queen or knave's most high.
The lowest lead when no lines here apply.
[This rule applies to all the suits but one:
You will, with trumps, decide what's to be done;
A rule for trumps, found usually sound,
Is to lead low the first time round.]
When trumps no longer remain to frighten,
Open suits with low cards, your task to lighten.

If you've five of the trump-suit, *lead trumps your first chance*;
By so doing, the value of your hand you enhance.
With four trumps, if two *are* a face and an ace,
Don't lead; nor with two having royalty's face,
Unless in two other suits you are strong;
For, when holding weak suits, such play would be wrong.

Perhaps when your long suit your partner's been told,
You should lead from a suit where a weak hand you hold;
In this, as whenever you've no rule for play,
What you know of the hands should show you your way.

When retaining the lead is what you seek,
Lead through the strong up to the weak.
When you open a suit having cards less than four,
Play high if you think that your partner has more.

RETURNING SUITS.

Return your friend's; but play your own suit first,
But promptly lead back trumps, for of bad play, the worst
Is neglecting to return a trump-card lead.
Till you've mastered this, you this rule most need.

When you are returning your partner's lead,
Give him your best. This rule always heed;
But if you had more than three to begin,
Leading back worst may help you to win.
If the master-card is yours to play,
After the first round, this don't delay.

In returning plain suits, you'll haste avoid;
For you would find yourself annoyed
If your partner should fail to reap the fruit
Of knowing which is your longest suit.

THE TRUMP REQUEST.

That you signal for trumps, your partner will know,
When you discard a higher ere discarding a low.
To do this requires two rounds of a suit;
But you talk to your partner, while your lips remain mute.

Your partner should know, when he sees your trey loose,
That you'll signal for trumps or can not play the deuce.
When a deuce is not played to an ace or a king,
Keep watch for a signal for trumps to come in.

SECOND HAND.

With ace, queen, knave, or ace, queen and the ten,
If you've knave, play it out; if not, the queen then.
With high sequence of three, or of two with one more,
A high card, second hand, is authority's law.

If you hold the two highest, or the second and third,
You will play one out second, if you value Pole's word.
But the general rule to be followed by you
Is: Do not play a three when you can play a two.

When you play second hand and a trick is in doubt,
Trump not, if to you four trumps were dealt out;
But if, in the trump suit, you've not more than three,
Play trumps second hand, to aid your vis-a-vis.

There comes a time when you'll wisely choose
To let pass, second hand, a trick you'll thus lose;
Your partner then will be under your ban,
If he doesn't lead trumps the first time he can.

THIRD HAND.

In finessing, you'll never perfection attain;
Playing queen before ace on the first round should gain.
Finessing is warranted more frequently
In the trump suit than in one of the other three.
Partner's lead lightly won, you should't return.
Give two trumps for one and you've something to learn.

FOURTH HAND.

When, fourth hand, you're holding a card that will make.
A trick then against you 'tis your duty to take:
Unless you've a tenace you hope to have saved;
If such is the case, this rule may be waived.

IN GENERAL.

To ruff is temptation a beginner will feel;
When you conquered this weakness, it was for your weal.
If an adverse strong trump-hand's devoid of a suit,
You should force him to ruff: this will show you're astute;
For in this way his trump-suit you lessen in length,
And empty his hand of its principal strength.

Discard best of a sequence when you have full command.
Your trumps will stop ruffing by opponent's hand.
If you play from a sequence and don't have the lead,
The lowest, most often, is the card that you need.

Rid self of high cards in your partner's suit;
Retain, and all systems you treat like a brute.
Guard tenace with care when but few cards are left;
Of the others' best card you may make them bereft.

When you look through your hand a discard to seek,
Make selection from suits in which you are weak.
The whist golden-rule is: Whatever you do,
Don't treat your opponents as you'd have them treat you.

After careful readings of "Pole on Whist," the writer was perplexed almost as much as at first. Discouraged in these attempts, he learned the Pole rhymes and followed them blindly during two or three sittings. A third reading of the English authority was more profitable; for the reasons given — for facts already possessed — were easily comprehended. But much which the Pole rhymes — forty-five lines in all — failed to convey, was learned. An attempt to avoid omission of essential points is here made. These rhymes are published in the belief that accuracy will commend them to experts, clearness to developing players and simplicity to beginners.

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